An Account of the Rabbets &c

One Mary Toft Wife to Joshua Toft Cloathworker at Godaleming near Guildford in Surrey, having so carried on a Trick as to have been reported to have been delivered of 17 Rabbets in Nov. 1726 and that the Person who attended her in her pretended Labours writ the following Letter to London about it

Nov. 9. 1726

Sir, Since I wrote to you, I have delivered the poor Woman of 3 more Rabbets, one of them a Dun Rabbet, the last leaped 23 Hours before it died. As soon as the 11th Rabbet was taken away, up leaped the 12th Rabbet which is now leaping. If you have any curious Person, that is pleased to come Post, may see another leap within her, and shall take it from her, if he pleases, which will be a Satisfaction to the Curious; I do not know how many Rabbets may be behind. I have brought her to Guildford for better Convenience. I am, Your hum Serv. &c

(John Howard)

The Truth of this whole Affair is as follows

The Account of the Woman pretended of the Matter is this; That on the 23d of April last, as she was weeding in a Field, she saw a Rabbit spring up near her, after which she ran with another Woman, that was at Work just by her; this set her a longing for Rabbets, being then as she thought 5 Weeks gone with Child; the other Woman perceiving she was uneasy charged her with longing for the Rabbit they could not catch but she denied it.

Soon after another Rabbit sprung up near the same Place which she endeavoured likewise to catch.

The same Night she dreamt, that she was in a Field! with those two Rabbets in her Lap and awaked with a sick fit, and from that Time for above 3 Months, she had a constant

and strong Desire to eat Rabbits, but being very poor, and indigent could not procure any, and so went on still she pretended to be delivered of these Rabbits.

A Thing of so very odd a Nature as this, soon made a great Noise, insomuch that some eminent Surgeons went from London by the Kings Order to examine into it

(2)

These Gentlemen would doubtless have soon perceived the Fraud, and never have been misled in their Apprehensions of the Thing as they were, had they but had fair Play in the Matter, and Scope for examining into the Truth of the Fact but this not being obtained by them, they began to suspect the Juggle into the Thing, as long as the Woman remained in the Country along with her own Acquaintance, and therefore it was found entirely necessary to have her brought to London and separated from all of her own Party, and to be attended by Persons, who should have entire fair Room for all proper and requisite Examination into the Matter. Accordingly she was brought to London, and lodged at the Bagnio in Leicester-Fields.

Here she still pretended from Time to Time to be in Labour Pains, which she had the Art exactly to counterfeit, but being strictly searched in the Matter, 'twas clearly found, that nothing of what she pretended, did come from her by a Birth ought to do And what now gave still more room to suspect the Fraud was her having got the Porter of the Bagnio clandestinely to procure her a very young Rabbet, which she way to carry on her Trick with that, as she had done before, by dividing it into peeces and so artfully managing the Matter as to seem to be delivered of such peeces, for it was never found that she pre-tended to be delivered of any whole live Rabbit at once, notwithstanding the Expressions in the Letter above, and those artful Motions and Tortures she could feign exactly like —

Labour Pains, and which were so great, that they sometimes shook the whole Bed she lay on.

These great Grounds to believe it a Fraud, made the Physicians, who by the Kings Order attended her, urge her to confess the Truth, and that if she did not they threatned that they would try a very painful Experiment upon her, which would fully try the Truth of the Matter, whereas if she would ingenuously confess the whole Truth, she should not undergo it.

These Threats made great Impressions upon her, so that to avoid so terrible an Operation, she confessed the Matter as follows. On Wed. Dec. 7 in the Morning she owned. That sometime since she miscarried, after which a Woman Accomplice told her, that if she would follow her Advice she need have no Occasion to work for her Living, as formerly, for she would put her into a Way of getting a very good livelihood, and should therefore expect Part of the Gain. Mary Toft ask'd what Way that was?

The Woman told, she would teach her how to pretend to be delivered of Rabbits which Mary Toft afterwards thus put in Practice, and so imposed upon the World.

Thus the whole Secret (2) came out, upon which this pretended Rabbit Breeder was carried to Tothill-fields Bridewell there to have such Treatment, as such an uncommon Impostor shall be thought fit by the Government to receive.

This is the "True Account" given gratis at anodyne necklace. See Adv. Mists Journal 10 Dec. 1726. The original tract is in Stevens collection of these pamphlets. EH.